

Your Child Has a Moderate Hearing Loss



If your audiologist has described your child's hearing loss as moderate, you may have many questions, such as:

What is moderate hearing loss?

Moderate hearing loss is a serious degree of hearing loss. Without hearing aids, a child with a moderate hearing loss will not be able to hear many speech sounds at a normal speaking level and will find it very hard to understand speech in noisy places, such as in a day care setting, playgrounds or at family gatherings. Children with moderate hearing loss are eligible for Early Intervention services in Massachusetts.

Will my child need hearing aids?

Talk to your audiologist about hearing aids. In most cases, the use of hearing aids will help children with moderate hearing loss to hear sounds and speech better. Some children will also use other types of equipment to help them hear in group settings. Your audiologist can help you to know if hearing aids are right for your child.

Does my child need intervention services now?

All children with hearing loss are eligible for Early Intervention services from birth until the age of three, no matter the degree. We encourage families who have a child with hearing loss to enroll in Early Intervention as early as possible to avoid delays in speech, language and brain development. You will work with your Early Intervention provider to decide the best plan for your child and your family.

Hearing loss is now found in children at a much younger age because of newborn hearing screening. Studies have shown that the earlier children with hearing loss receive Early Intervention, the better the results. Talk to your child's audiologist and doctor or call the **Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program** at **800-882-1435** for more information. You can also e-mail newborn.hearing@state.ma.us.

You might want to consider these tips for your child with a moderate hearing loss:

- Connect with other parents of children with hearing loss. Ask your audiologist or Early Intervention provider if there is a parent group in your area, and consider contacting **Mass Family TIES** to be connected to another family.
- Children with moderate hearing loss will need more help understanding the meaning of things that happen around them. You can help your child by describing the things that you see, and by narrating all of your activities together, such as meals, bath time, changing diapers and bedtime.
- Continue to have your child's hearing tested on a regular basis, as recommended by your audiologist. The audiologist will keep track of your child's hearing in case there are any changes.
- Consider enrolling in the **Family Sign Language Program**. In Massachusetts, all families of children with hearing loss are eligible for American Sign Language classes that are taught in the home. Sign language can give your child earlier access to language, which benefits children's brain development and speech.
- Contact the **Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**. MCDHH provides many helpful resources and services, including Children's Specialists who can work with your child. MCDHH is also a good source of information about helpful technologies for children and adults who have a hearing loss.
- Be sure to let people know it is important to have your child's attention when they talk with your child.
- Cut down or eliminate background noise, for example, television or radio, when speaking or reading to your child. Also make sure that your face is visible when speaking or reading to your child.
- Children and adults with hearing loss can feel isolated when they do not understand what people around them are saying, especially in a group setting. As your child gets older, let them know that it is OK to ask someone to repeat themselves, or to speak more slowly and clearly.
- Seek medical attention whenever you suspect your child has an ear infection.